

MINUTES
Town of North
January 9, 2006
North Town Hall

Mayor Jeffcoat called the regular meeting of Council to order at 7:00 p.m. and declared a quorum. Present were Council members Drew, Binyard, Lane and Gleaton. Also in attendance were Administrator Ott, Chief Fallaw, and Town Clerk, Beth Kincaid.

Mayor Jeffcoat thanks visitors for coming and welcomed Mrs. Lane back from her extended vacation out-of-town.

The Minutes from the December meeting were approved as presented.

Public Presentation:

Mayor Jeffcoat introduced Lee Youngblood, branch manager at First Citizens Bank in North, and invited him to make his presentation. Mr. Youngblood thanked Council and citizens for allowing him to speak. He is available to Town and citizens to discuss various financial services available. Open-door policy - please visit any time.

Mayor Jeffcoat called upon Mrs. Eartha Thomas for her presentation

Mrs. Thomas explained she was there to express concern about an incident with the police on January 1, 2006. She said she was leaving St. Darcus Church and turned on Bedford, where she had to swerve to avoid fireworks trash in the middle of the street. She continued on her way home when she noticed a blue light flashing. She stated since she had not done anything wrong, she assumed they were trying to stop someone else. Then, she saw a second blue light in the rear. She continued on home down Parkwood Street, and turned into her driveway. The police cars followed her into the driveway. An officer got out of the car and told her to put her hands up. At that point, two more police cars had arrived and her husband had come out to see what was going on. He was ordered back into the house. She said she was not charged with anything and needed to understand why four police cars were at her house and why she and her husband were treated the way they were.

Reverend Henry Murdock, Pastor of St. Darcus Church asked to be heard. He said this is the second incident involving his church and the police. During a revival, police set up a checkpoint and many church members were stopped. A verbal complaint was made and a letter issued stating any apology. He said these incidents affect the church and the North community. He is very concerned and is here tonight to request the incident with Thomas be addressed by Council.

Ms. Jacqueline Bamberg asked to be heard. She stated law abiding citizens are being treated as lawless citizens. In the incident with Mrs. Thomas, the police did not assess the situation adequately. The incident reflects badly on the police. She said when people are wrong, they apologize. Why have the police not offered an apology to Mrs. Thomas?

Mayor Jeffcoat expressed his appreciation to the citizens for bringing concerns to Council and assured them the issues would be addressed. He said "we take your concerns seriously." Mr. Gleaton asked for clarification that Mrs. Thomas was not charged or ticketed and it was stated she was not.

Water/Sewer Report:

Mr. Ott presented the Water/Sewer report as presented in the report distributed. He went on to say Town is waiting on final approval of water/sewer lines to Morgan Lane Housing before turning on. Hydrants in Town have been flushed and flow tested. Dale will be checking valves (Ott explained valve operation). Freddie cut down trees along the railroad track and it looks much better. Lane said the trees are still on the ground and that is unsightly. Ott replied they are waiting for trees to decompose before moving.

Mayor Jeffcoat stated with regard to Morgan Lane, that they are open and taking applications. The representative is at Morgan Lane two days a week.

Police Report:

Fallow reviewed the Group defenses on the report distributed. He reported crime is down and has been over the last three months. However, he expressed concern about the number of narcotics violations. He noted the assault on officers, obstructing, failure to stop, resisting arrests, and unlawful weapon presents a disturbing pattern. Officer safety is an issue. Officer Bird was recently assaulted. Fallow apprised Council of an armed robbery that occurred involving one 17-year-old and two juveniles. All three were denied bail. One is in Orangeburg County jail and juveniles are at DJJ. Council needs to be aware that juveniles cannot be tried until 17th birthday. One is in May and the other is in late August. This will cost the Town \$25/day per juvenile until they are 17. This is a non-budgeted cost.

Gleaton asked when Check Points are conducted, who is in charge. Fallow replied that he is the supervising officer. Gleaton stated he has received reports from the public that it appears police from other departments have been the ones in charge. Fallow assured him he is the senior supervising officer. Gleaton asked how many Check Points are conducted and Fallow replied they are approved for one Check Point a month; other police departments such as Springfield, Norway and Swansea assist, and North Police assists at their checkpoints.

Fallow reported 90-days notices are coming up on abandoned houses/vehicles and police will be following up

Old Business:

- Mayor reviewed financial report that was distributed
- 321 Highway Project - will be moving toward business district within the next few weeks
- Self Defense Course - Kincaid reported it begins tomorrow night - classes are almost full

New Business:

- Land Acquisition - Ott reported land Town was considering may not come through. Will be looking at other parcels. Drew asked about the baseball field and Ott explained we are looking at places where children and families can walk to. Ott stated we cannot apply for grant until we have identified the parcel of land we are considering. He explained there will be a grant-writing workshop he would like to attend. Lane made the motion that Ott be approved to attend the grant-writing workshop to be held on Friday, January 13, 2006. Gleaton seconded and motion approved unanimously.
- Personnel/Policy Manual. Mayor explained manual has not been updated in three years and needed to be updated. Lane made a motion to approved Town Administration reviewing and updating the Personnel/Policy manual. Binyard seconded and motion approved unanimously.
- Christian Adams from the Justice Department will be here on January 17, 2006 at 1:30 to discuss and clarify past issues Town has had with annexation. Public may attend. Adams is from a small town in South Carolina and can relate to our issues.
- Police Car - the old police car is not being used and consideration being given to trade for a truck that Freddie could use to get around the Town to pull the trailer and carry his equipment. Using the police car may be considered. Binyard made a motion, seconded by Lane and approved unanimously for Town to move forward with the trade or sale of the police vehicle to obtain transportation for Freddie.

Mayor Jeffcoat reported the Community of Character trait for January is Self-Discipline.

Jeffcoat called for any public comments.

A citizen asked how many police cars the Department has and Fallow reported four cars. Another citizen asked what time the Check Point was on New Year's Eve. Fallow reported 12:45 a.m. - 4:00 a.m.

Executive Session:

Mayor called for a motion to move into Executive Session. Gleaton made the motion that Council go into Executive Session to discuss three personnel issues, Binyard seconded and approved unanimously.

Council returned from Executive Session at 9:05 p.m. and the following motions were made and approved:

Lane made the motion increase an employee's pay by 25 cents. Seconded by Binyard and approved unanimously.

Lane made the motion, seconded by Binyard and approved unanimously to pay all employees according to Town Policy, to include insurance benefits. With regard to health insurance, the employee pays 33% and the Town pays 66%.

Mayor Jeffcoat reported the incident with Mrs. Thomas and police department was discussed but no decision was made as Council wants to review the incident further before making a decision. There will be a meeting held and all parties will be notified.

There being no further business, Council adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

The next Town Council meeting will be held, Monday, February 13, 2006 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Kincaid

APPROVED

Mayor Earl Jeffocat: _____

Council Members:

Paul Drew: _____

Rose Binyard: _____

Harriet Lane: _____

Aubrey Gleaton: _____